

# **EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

## **Meeting of May 6, 2009**

Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center  
3300 Briggs Chaney Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

**Members Present:** Kim Bobola, Ph.D. (Chair); Colleen Ionata (Vice Chair); David Kochanski, Esq.; G. Stanley Doore; Allan Mulligan; Alfreda Hunt Payne, Ph.D.; Vanessa Ali; Anthony Ramirez; Benoy Thomas; Marva R. Deskins, Esq.; Eric Luedtke; Thomas Aylward; John Fausti, Esq.; and Dwayne Parris

**Members Absent:** Bill Strassberger (Parliamentarian); Amjad Chaudhry; Sheala Durant (Treasurer) and John Thomas.

**Staff:** Chuck Crisostomo (Acting Director, Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center) and Gwen Haney (Program Specialist, EMRSC)

**Guests:** Beth Thomas (Blake High School); Helene Mulligan; Frank & Claudia Carouso (GLCA); Barbara Foresti (White Oak Community); Kristin O'Connor (Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission); Claire Iseli (Staff, District 4 Council Office); Mark Pharaoh (East County Recreation Advisory Board); Cathy Mahmud (Department of Housing and Community Affairs); and Cynthia Butler (DHCA)

**Citizen's Forum:** Chair Bobola welcomed everyone.

Kristin O'Connor, M-NCPP, advised that the final decision by the Planning Board for development of the Fairland Park Housing Community will be made tomorrow at 1:00 pm at the Park and Planning Headquarters.

Mark Pharaoh advised of a meeting regarding interim and future use plans for Sligo Creek Golf Course on May 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the MRO Auditorium<sup>1</sup> located at 8787 Georgia, Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m.

**Chair Bobola** then introduced the evening's speakers, Cathy Mahmud and Cynthia Butler, from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs. This presentation on the Burtonsville Revitalization Project included an opportunity to provide information on streetscape design features.

**Cathy Mahmud and Cynthia Butler** provided a description of the Streetscape Standards and asked for the Board's recommendations on various sidewalk scoring patterns, bench types, lampposts, and bike racks as well as their colors. They noted that the bike racks and benches were made largely of recycled materials. Streetscape features will be placed along the Burtonsville

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<sup>1</sup> This meeting is being hosted by the M-NCPPC Department of Parks.

Access Road. They stated that the Montgomery County Department of Transportation is backing the road 100% and expects its completion in 1-1/2 years.

**Tom Aylward** questioned the need for the use of such streetscape features along the short stretch of road. The purpose of including them is to make it a more walkable road.

Board members reviewed the plans and cast votes. Choices with a majority will be taken back to the Department of Housing and Community Affairs' planning board.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Chair Bobola asked for a review of the minutes of the ECCAB Meeting of April 1, 2009.

Regarding the discussion of Pedestrian Safety, Stan Doore requested the addition of revisions as follows: Stan Doore recommends that cross walk *vertical paddles be expanded*.

1. Installation of *flexible vertical spindles* is helpful....
3. At end add: *and is useful from a driver's point if view*.
4. Bikeway routes and sidewalks could be straightened *if modular elevated* construction is utilized on *highly variable terrain*. *It would be very environmentally friendly too*. This suggestion should be passed on to *Bob Simpson*.

**[May 6, 2009 - 1]** A motion to approve the minutes of April 1, with the addition of Stan Doore's revisions, was offered. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

### **Director's Report: Chuck Crisostomo, Acting Director**

- About 50 people attended the dedication of two Kwanzan cherry trees for Marilyn and Don Praisner on Saturday, May 2, at the Marilyn J. Praisner Library and Recreation Center.
- Also on Saturday, Ashford at Woodlake on Castle Boulevard, had a fire destroying 70 units, although there were no serious injuries.
- The Director of Housing and Community Affairs seeks applicants for the Community Development Advisory Committee, which assists the department in reviewing requests for funds.
- As mentioned previously, the Planning Board will meet tomorrow, May 7, to decide on the Fairland Community Housing Project which would be located east of Route 29, north of Greencastle Road, and adjacent to Fairland Regional Park. A flyer with additional information was distributed.
- May is Asian American Heritage month. A flyer with activities was distributed.

### **Chair's Report: Kim Bobola**

- Congratulated the Outreach Committee, Marva Deskins, Fredda Payne, Benoy Thomas, Vanessa Ali, and Allan Mulligan for their roles in making the Youth Forum a great success.
- Copies of the proposed legislation to consolidate select boards and commissions were received. The matter was referred to Board Committees for review and comments.
- Requested a show of interest in touring the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) facility in May. Board members preferred postponing this until July or later.
- A copy of ECCAB's written testimony on the operating budget was provided.
- The legislative forum which will be hosted at the June 3<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting is moving along. So far, six of eight members of the District 14 and District 20 delegation invited have responded that they will attend.

### **Council's Report: Claire Iseli**

- This year's Burtonsville Day will be held on September 26. The next committee meeting will be on May 19, 6:30 p.m., at the Marilyn J. Praisner Recreation Center.
- Some Parks and Recreation community buildings are being under-used/maintained and maintaining them may not be worth the operating costs in keeping them standing. These buildings are, however, valued by communities. Consequently, there is a temporary halt to tearing them down, and other uses (i.e., day care centers, scout troops, etc.) are being searched out. County Council is open to suggestions.
- Funding for the Maydale Conservation Nature Center has not yet been assured. The center is located on park land in a neighborhood area of East County. It has trails and wetlands, which make it a good site for early learning environmental education. The school system, which has previously supported the center, is not willing to provide the needed funding. This challenge will be presented to the new District 4 County Council member.
- County Executive Leggett has submitted four bills<sup>2</sup> to be reviewed at a public hearing on June 9<sup>th</sup>. The bills can be found on the county's web site.
- ECCAB might be interested in the discussions underway about the county's Growth Policy, especially in terms of infrastructure.
- Developer Chris Jones is moving forward with the Burtonsville Shopping Center. He has acquired a trailer for temporary housing of CVS.

### **Committee Reports**

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<sup>2</sup> Bill 25-09: Contracts and Procurement Minority Owned Businesses - Amendments; Bill 22-09: Enforcement of County Laws – Notice of Violation – Appeals; Bill 23-09: Unused Vehicles - Storage; Bill 24-09: Building Permits and Inspection.

### **Outreach Committee: Marva Deskins, Chair**

- Marva Deskins thanked the Outreach Committee and EMRSC staff for their assistance with the Youth Forum, which was the agenda of the last Outreach Committee meeting.

### **Services Committee: Anthony Ramirez, Chair**

- The State Highway Administration (SHA) replied to the Board's letter regarding the Burtonsville Post Office's incoming and outgoing traffic. SHA did not feel that there is enough traffic to warrant a traffic light and said that signage is not needed because the community knows where the post office is. Dwayne Parris noted that business is down at this post office, and suggested that we go back and push the issue further. Vanessa Ali agreed, adding that it is a traffic hazard, and she recently had a near accident at the location.
- A meeting was held with a couple of police officers and crime, as well as Hollywood Ballroom, issues were discussed. The police officers noted that Castle Boulevard and Lockwood Drive areas were the highest crime areas in East County.

### **Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee: Tom Aylward, Chair**

The committee met with police officers to get their viewpoints regarding the Hollywood Ballroom matter. Tom Aylward said the rights of both businesses and citizens need to be preserved. The committee will make a recommendation to the County Executive as to where they think it should go. Input from all Board members is welcome.

### **Old Business : None**

### **New Business:**

**Chair Bobola** received a copy of two bills<sup>3</sup> introduced by Councilmember Leventhal to reduce the number of Boards, committees and commissions in the County (see Attachment B). One proposal calls for Citizens Recreation Advisory Boards to be merged with Citizens Advisory Boards to be merged with the. This could provide for savings, among other things, in staff hours. Councilmember Leventhal has offered to connect with the Board to explain further. The Board has until June to provide input.

**Chuck Crisostomo** added that the Regional Center Directors will meet next week to also look at options.

**Eric Luedtke** noted that current economic times are requiring cuts. This effort to reduce the number of boards may be better than cuts to programs or services.

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<sup>3</sup> Bill 20-09: Boards, Committees and Commissions - Committee Evaluation Review Board, and Bill 21-09: Boards, Committees and Commissions – Amendments.

**Tom Aylward** said that the need merge select boards or commissions is apparent – if the board or commission appears to have trouble getting members. He suggested, however, that if a current Board is active, it should be retained.

**Stan Doore** stated that the Recreation Department has several activity-specific Boards within the same regional area and these Boards should be consolidated within the area that they represent.

**Colleen Ionata** noted that too many Boards being lumped into one group could result in an increase in Board responsibilities that would be too great. Additionally, the logistics for doing this were not clear.

**Chuck Crisostomo** advised that the actual members of a Citizens Advisory Board may be displaced by (three) appointees that would represent the Citizens Recreation Advisory Board, as a subcommittee.

**Eric Luedtke** suggested the Board put together some questions for Councilman Leventhal.

**Chair Bobola** suggested Board committees work on the questions at their next meeting and return them to her.

#### **Nominating Committee Report: Tom Aylward**

Nominations are not yet complete, but the following are offered:

Chair	Bill Strassberger
	Marva Deskins
Vice Chair	John Fausti
Parliamentarian	Eric Luedtke
Secretary	No nominations yet

#### **Announcements:**

**Stan Doore** noted that Blake High School's production of Oklahoma was superbly done.

**Anthony Ramirez** said 6-7 cars in his neighborhood were broken into, all of them for GPS's and iPods.

**Eric Luedtke** suggested the Board write a letter of thanks to the firefighters for their role in the recent Ashford at Woodlake Apartment fire.

**[May 6, 2009 - 1]** A motion to approve the letter of appreciation for firefighters was offered. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

***The next meeting of ECCAB is scheduled for June 3, 2009.***